

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 PA-01 L-01 INR-05 PRS-01 SP-02

PM-03 SAM-01 SAJ-01 /038 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:KNBROWN:TL

APPROVED BY EUR:JGLOWENSTEIN

EUR/EE:NGANDREWS

C;JMONTGOMERY

S/S-O:LRMACFARLANE

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R 170028Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY WARSAW

INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 177229

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E.O11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, SOPN, PL

SLBJECT: POLISH COMPLAINTS REGARDING RFE

REFERENCE: STATE 169785, WARSAW 4570, 3622, 4681, 4666

1. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS HAD HOUR-LONG DISCUSSION JULY 16
WITH MICKELSON, WALTERS, ROBERTS AND SHUB ON POLISH 15 PAGE
MEMORANDUM (WARSAW 4570) AND ON RFE PRICE RISE TREATMENT.

2. WE BRIEFED THEM GENERALLY ON THE RECENT EXPANSION OF
US-POLISH BILATERAL RELATIONS AND SPECIFICALLY ON OUR VIEW
OF THE PRICE RISES WHICH ARE WIDELY REGARDED AS ECONOMICALLY
NECESSARY. WE NOTED THAT WE FIND SOME RFE COMMENTARIES

PRICE RISES FACTUAL, REASONABLE AND OBJECTIVE. WE CONSIDER
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OTHERS AS EMOTIONAL, SEEMINGLY UNRELATED TO THE FACTS AND

GIVEN TO SWEEPING GENERALIZATIONS. WE REGARD THE EXPRESSION OF SUCH VIEWS OR COMMENTS AS IN VIOLATION OF RFE INTERNAL GUIDELINES AND INCONSISTENT WITH BROAD US POLICY OBJECTIVES.

3. MICKELSON RESPONDED AT THE OUTSET BY POINTING OUT THAT BIB AND RFE REVIEW OF THE SCRIPTS SHOW THAT MANAGEMENT CONTROL WAS EFFECTIVE, AND THAT ALMOST ALL SCRIPTS WERE

WITHIN GUIDELINES. SECONDLY, HE REMINDED THAT THE RADIOS WERE ENVISIONED BY THE EISENHOWER COMMISSION AND DECLARED BY CONGRESS TO BE "INDEPENDENT" AND INSULATED FROM THE DEPARTMENT AND ARE SUBJECT ONLY TO THE OVERSIGHT OF BIB.

4. MICKELSON AND ROBERTS AGREED THAT THERE ARE SELECTED COMMENTARIES WHICH WERE IN VIOLATION OF GUIDELINES. MICKELSON PROMISED THAT APPROPRIATE ACTION HAS OR WILL BE TAKEN TO CORRECT THESE PROBLEMS. HE STATED THAT, AS WE KNOW, THE SITUATION IN THE RADIOS IS IN A STATE OF FLUX. NEW GUIDELINES ARE IN COURSE OF PREPARATION, AND RFE COMMENTARY WILL SLOWLY BE BROUGHT INTO LINE WITH "WESTERN STANDARDS OF OBJECTIVITY". "ANALYSIS" WILL REPLACE "COMMENTARY" AND STEPS TO SCREEN ALL COMMENTARY BEFORE BROADCAST MAY BE CONSIDERED. CHANGES IN PERSONNEL AT POLISH BROADCASTING CAN BE EXPECTED SOON.

5. WE AGREED THAT THE RADIOS ARE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME IMPROVEMENT IN RECENT MONTHS. WE POINTED OUT THAT WE HAVE PROVIDED GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY GUIDANCE IN THE HARTMAN-ABSHIRE LETTER AND HAVE FREQUENT INFORMAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND BIB AND RFE/RL IN WASHINGTON AS WELL AS BETWEEN OUR EE EMBASSIES AND THE BROADCASTING DESKS IN MUNICH. WE VOLUNTEERED TO PROVIDE MORE GUIDANCE AND INFO ON US POLICY IF IT WOULD BE USEFUL. BIB AND RFE/RL WELCOME MORE EXCHANGES OF VIEWS WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND EE EMBASSIES, ALTHOUGH MICKELSON QUICKLY POINTED OUT THAT THE RFE/RL EDITORS WILL DECIDE WHETHER AND HOW SUCH INFO AND GUIDELINES ARE USED.

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6. FOR WARSAW: WE SUGGEST A RESPONSE TO THE POLISH DEMARCHE (WARSAW 3622) ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: AS THE POLISH GOVERNMENT IS AWARE, RFE WAS ESTABLISHED AS AN INDEPENDENT RADIO STATION UNDER THE OVERSIGHT OF THE BIB IT IS THE BIB'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REVIEW AND EVALUATE THE RADIOS' MISSION AND OPERATION. WHEN THE POLISH AUTHORITIES HAVE A COMPLAINT OR OBSERVATION ABOUT A BROADCAST, WE INVITE

THEM TO BRING IT TO THE EMBASSY'S OR DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION. WILL BRING THE POLISH VIEWS TO THE ATTENTION OF BIB AND RFE OFFICIALS. WE HAVE CALLED THE 15 PAGE STUDY, AND SEVERAL RFE COMMENTARIES ON THE PRICE RISES TO THE URGENT ATTENTION OF THE BIB AND RFE. THEY HAVE ASSURED THE DEPARTMENT THAT THEY WILL CAREFULLY STUDY THE POLISH VIEWS AND TAKE SUCH ACTION AS THEY DEEM APPROPRIATE. UNDER US LAW, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS NO SUPERVISORY ROLE OVER RFE BROADCASTS.

7. FYI: WE BELIEVE THAT RFE PRICE RISE TREATMENT, WHILE FAR FROM IDEAL, COULD HAVE BEEN MUCH WORSE HAD NOT BIB AND RFE MANAGEMENT CLOSELY WATCHED THE SITUATION. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, RADIO BROADCASTING, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, PRICE INDEXES, PRICE CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE177229
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: KNBROWN:TL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760276-0043
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760747/aaaabpeu.tel
Line Count: 129
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS, LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS, LIMDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 169785, 76 WARSAW 4570
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <30 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLISH COMPLAINTS REGARDING RFE
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, PL, US, RFE
To: WARSAW
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006